17 Questions
to Ask Before You
Buy A Website
WWW
Piggybank Business Mastery Series

—Not *Just* A Website, A ***Piggybank*** Website—

My intent for this booklet is to give you the essential information you need **so you don't waste your money** or fall victim to bad decisions.

Every week, I hear of people who have sunk **too much money into websites and gotten too little return**. Every week, I hear horror stories of people losing their websites because they didn't know any better when they bought their website.

There's so much more to getting a website than getting a website.

Ultimately, I don't think you want a website. I think you want a *Piggybank* Website. That is to say, **you want a website that makes you money!**

Maybe that's actual sales. Maybe it's getting the phone to ring with qualified prospects. Maybe it's building your mailing list. Whatever the marketing result you're going after, I believe **your website should be designed around achieving those very marketing results**.

I strongly encourage you to use the questions in this booklet to make sure when you invest in your website, you're investing in a Website that will deliver results.

Ask the questions and protect yourself today!

Sincerely,

Scott Gingrich

P.S. – We're here to help! Feel free to call me at **705-792-7155** if you have any questions.

Don’t Panic!

This might get technical.

If there’s anything here you don’t understand, we’re more than happy to explain it to you.

We’re here to help.

www.PiggybankTechnology.com

705-792-7155

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1. Will I Own & Control My Domain Name?

This is the single biggest mistake I see companies making. Every week, I hear fresh new stories of how someone has lost their website because they didn't own their domain name.

Let me explain…

Your domain name is what people type into web browsers to go to your website, e.g. **www.yourcompany.com**. If someone else owns and controls that domain, they have the power to take it, and all your earned traffic, away from you.

They make not take it because they're unscrupulous (although I have seen several cases of that) but what if they go out of business, move away or worse? And I've seen all those cases too.

The point is this:

> **Your domain name is an important business asset and that means that you should own and control it. Period.**

Own Your Domain Name

Owning your domain name means that it's in your name. More specifically, your name and contact information is listed as the ***Administrative Contact***. Most importantly, the Email address listed for the administrative contact is one of yours.

The reason it's so important to have your Email address in the Administrative Contact is because any changes to your domain name must be approved through an Email sent to that address.

Control Your Domain Name

Owning your domain name is not enough. You need to control it. That means you hold the access information to be able to log-in and change information about your domain. Where do you log-in? At the website where the domain name is registered…

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All domain names are registered with a "domain name company" called a ***Registrar***. There are many, many Domain Registrar companies and they all act as agents for the main repository of domain names. The Domain Registrar we use is GoDaddy.com.

The Domain Registrar handles all aspects of your domain name, including:

- **Renewals**. When your domain name is expiring and it's time to renew, it's the Domain Registrar that sends out the renewal notice (to the administrative contact).
- **Nameservers**. When people type in your domain name, it's the nameservers that tell the browser where your website is stored. Simply put, the "Nameserver" is the technical name for where your website is hosted (the computer where the web pages are stored).

  If you ever switch web hosting, you'll need to log-in and update the nameserver to reflect the new web server.

You DON'T need to understand the technical stuff like "nameservers"…you DO need to know that YOU have the log-in information for your Domain Name and YOU are the Administrative Contact.

Watch Out For…Often, web designers will register your domain name for you and put the domain name in their Domain Registrar account and put themselves as the Administrative Contact. They may do this to spare dragging you through the "pain" of you doing it (and it is certainly simpler), but you lose control.

At Piggybank Technology, the very first thing we investigate is to make sure you own and control your domain name. At the end of the web project, we give you a **Domain Control Sheet** for your records with all the necessary info already filled in.

2. Will I Have "100% Walk Away" Control Of My Site?

What happens if, for whatever reason, you need to move your site from one web host to another? Is it going to be a hassle? **Is it even possible**?

Down the road, you may want or need to switch web designers and at that time, you will need your **web hosting information**. Even if you keep your website hosted where it's at, the new web designer will need the hosting information in order to update and maintain your site.

Typically, your **web hosting information** will include:

- FTP information (e.g. ftp.yourcompany.com)
- FTP login ID & password.

If your website uses any **databases** or other such features, you may have additional information like:

- Database name.
- Database user ID & password.

If you are using a content management system like Joomla or Word Press to run your site, you may also need:

- Super-administrator level user ID & password.

You should have all the information needed to move your website from one host to another.

At Piggybank Technology, you receive a **Website Control Sheet** at the end of your project with all the access information required to move your site.

In fact, you'd be able to give this sheet to the next web developer and they wouldn't even need to let us know you're moving the site! **That's "100% Walk Away Control"!**

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3. Can I Update The Site Myself?

Many people don't like the idea of ***having*** to rely on a web designer to make simple changes to their site. It usually means delays in getting the information up and a charge every time you want to make a change.

If that describes you, then you should be looking at a site that is run on a Content Management System, CMS for short. A CMS is a database application that allows you to log-in to your website and add and change pages using a word-processor like interface.

Using a CMS is a good option for many (but not all) websites. Typically, it adds a bit of cost to the project up front, but you will quickly save that money back because you don't have to pay every time you want to change your site.

With a CMS, the look of your site can be pretty much whatever you want and it has the added benefits of being able to add some very nice, sophisticated features:

- Calendars, Galleries, Business/Membership Directory, Blog or article posts with comments, Forums, etc.

There will still be some elements that you'll want to use your web designer for (like changing the overall template or look of your site or advanced page layout), but you will be able to add new pages, change the menu and edit existing pages.

Watch Out For…If you do get a site run on a CMS, you want to make sure that you can have Search Engine Friendly pages (and that your site can be properly Search Engine Optimized) and that it is not a proprietary system that will lock-you-in to "their" system.

At Piggybank Technology, we use the most **popular and widely supported CMS's** (Joomla & Word Press) for our Customers who want control to update their site. With each of these projects, we provide live training and a simplified user manual for future reference.

4. Will My Website Match My "Brand"?

Today, having a website is a critical marketing tool. In fact, most people assume you have a website and not having a website means you're not serious about being in business.

As such, it's critical that your website matches your branding. It needs to have a look that is custom to you.

> **If you don't have your branding done yet, a good web design company will help you to identify your target market and design good branding elements that can be used for your website and other marketing activities.**

Looking Good Isn't Enough!

Your site needs to do more than look good…**it needs to look good to your Target Market**. Part of what makes a website effective is that it "resonates" with your target market…it needs to catch their attention on a subconscious level. That's the power of good branding.

When getting a website designed, find out if you need to provide artwork (like logos) or if they can help you to develop that too. Regardless, make sure your new website fits in visually with the rest of your marketing materials.

At Piggybank Technology, we can help you to develop your strategic brand and translate that to a website that resonates with your Target Market.

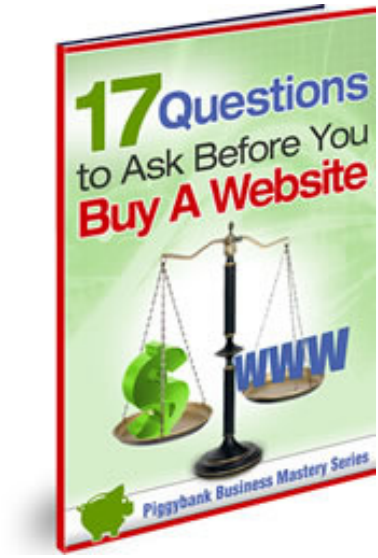
5. Will I Be Able To Send An Email Newsletter?

Sending out a newsletter/blog isn't exactly part of your website, but getting people on your list is!

We call those sign-up boxes "opt-in" boxes. People are opting to give you their name and Email address and become "signed-up" for your offer.

It's Not The Box That Gets People To Sign-up…

It's not the opt-in box that gets people to sign-up and get your mail…it's the offer!



Currently, on our website, we offer people a free copy of this very booklet that you're reading. It's something that appeals to our Target Market…business owners looking to buy or upgrade their website.

This booklet is a way to further introduce who we are and our philosophy to potential Customers…to start building a relationship with you. Visitors get this for FREE in exchange for giving us their name and Email address.

By adding this kind of "ethical bribe", the percentage of visitors to your site who opt-in will go up dramatically!

Once You've Got The Names, Then What?

"The Money's In The List!"

Once you start building your list of opt-ins, it's important that you develop a marketing plan for them. This may include such things as sending out a monthly newsletter and the occasional sales offer. Or, you may develop a more sophisticated "auto responder" type of drip marketing campaign.

Whatever type of Email marketing you do with your list, it's important that you use the right technology to do it with.

You should not be using regular Email programs (like Outlook) to send out your newsletters!

With spam filters and the threat of getting "black listed" on the Internet, it is more important than ever to use the right Emailing program that allows you to be compliant with current laws.

Typically, you would use an on-line Email service that will handle all aspects of your opt-in Email marketing, including:

- Code for your opt-in boxes
- Single or double opt-in
- Automatic unsubscribe links on every Email
- Handling Email bounces
- Tracking Email open rates

Not all Email services are the same and your web design company should be able to assess your particular needs and recommend the right Email service to use.

At Piggybank Technology, we understand that "the money's in the list" and can develop effective **Email marketing campaigns** for you and get you set-up with the Email service best suited to you and your marketing goals.

6. Will My Website Be Search Engine Friendly (SEO'd)?

Traffic doesn't "just happen". Unfortunately, many people have the common "build it and they will come" misconception.

There are specific methods for generating quality traffic to your website. One of the most important traffic generation methods is Search Engine Optimization.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO for short) is the process of creating a website that is optimized or designed to show up high in the Search Engine results for particular search phrases (called keywords) that people type into the Search Engine.

> **For example, if you have a website about your dog grooming service in the city of Barrie, then you want your website to be the first listed when people type things like "dog grooming barrie" into the Search Engines.**

Search Engine Optimization is the process of influencing where you show up in the Search Engine results for certain keywords.

I use the word "influencing" because we can't control how the Search Engines rank your site—no one can. But, we can certainly influence the Search Engines. It can take several weeks to a few months for changes to be picked-up by the Search Engines, but when those changes are picked-up, it'll be well worth it.

> **For example, if you go to Google and search "classic wood boat for sale", you'll find one of our sites, www.ladyben.com, is in the top 3.**

The actual ranking fluctuates from day-to-day and from Search Engine-to-Search Engine, but the important thing is we're always in the top half of the first page!

When you get your website designed, you should make sure consideration is being given to designing it to be Search Engine Optimized for keywords that are important to you.

At Piggybank Technology, we have a great track record of getting our Customers sites to show up well in the Search Engines. **We're happy to show you several examples of Top 3 rankings we've achieved for our Clients.**

7. Will My Website Work on Mobile Devices?

The number of people using their smart phones and tablets to browse the web has skyrocketed! That means that people are going to your website on mobile devices like never before.

Instead of serving up a squished down, tiny version of your website, you can now give them a mobile optimized experience.

The most popular option we have and the one we recommend most is something called "**Responsive Web Design**". That means your website will automatically adjust itself and optimize the view for the smaller screens of mobile devices.

It takes a bit more planning and does cost a bit extra, but if you've got mobile visitors, it's well worth it.

At Piggybank Technology, we can help you decide if a mobile web strategy is important for your business and recommend the mobile strategy best suited to you and your budget**. We do mobile!**

8. Who Will Host My Website & Email?

Not all web hosting is created equal!

It's true that you can find web hosting for next to free (and some of it is pretty good!), but price should not be the first consideration when choosing a web host.

When looking for an excellent web host, you should look for:

- Track record for sites always being up. Remember, even an excellent up-time of 99.9% means about 9 hours of down-time every year.
- Unlimited Email Accounts.
- Storage space to hold your files; especially important if you're going to have lots of files such as graphics that take up room, or IMAP email.
- Bandwidth (amount of web traffic) to handle the number of visitors to your site—especially important if you have a high traffic site or one with a lot of streaming video or audio.
- Track record of providing quick and competent tech support.
- Backups of your Website
- Security

At Piggybank Technology, we offer excellent, secure web hosting starting at $10/month but we don't promote it as a stand-alone service because it's available only to our Customers.

9. Do They Provide Technical Support?

Imagine your website is getting 100 visitors a day (we have one site getting over 1,000!) and then your site breaks. For whatever reason, something stops working. Maybe your opt-in form stops working. Maybe your whole site goes down.

Stuff happens. And that's especially true when it comes to technology.

And when stuff does happen, you want to know that you have the means for getting those technical issues resolved quickly.

When getting your website created, it's important that you find out what kind of technical support is available and (this can be very important) *who* is providing that technical support.

At Piggybank Technology, **we are your first line of support** for any issues with your website. We have an entire website dedicated to support with a helpdesk, training videos, remote access options and a knowledgebase that answers the most popular questions and issues. www.piggybanksupport.com

10. Do They Provide Training?

When it comes to getting marketing materials like brochures, there's no training needed. But websites aren't (or shouldn't be) brochures.

Websites are something more…

> **Piggybank Websites are a great opportunity to go beyond a static brochure and engage potential customers in new and dynamic ways.**

I'm not talking about the kind of training where you need to become a technical guru. The kind of training I'm talking about is the kind where you learn how to use your website to market effectively.

If website marketing is new to you, then you need a web marketing company that will help you to do such things as:

- Post new articles on your blog
- Run a newsletter
- Get links to your website to generate more traffic and better Search Engine Rankings
- Develop an Internet Marketing plan
- Monitor and understand your web stats

There's a variety of ways to receive training: videos, one-on-one, regular informative articles, etc. Look for a company that can become your full-service provider for an integrated web marketing solution.

At Piggybank Technology, we devote a lot of time and energy (this book as an example) educating our Customers and Prospects about using Technology to become more effective and efficient at marketing**. We offer training in every Web project we do.**

11. Do They Handle Shopping Carts And Online Payments?

The design of your shopping cart (the checkout process) has a major impact on your sales. When we switched a customer of ours from one shopping cart system to the one they use today, they saw an overnight 20% increase in sales!

The reason for the 20% jump in sales was directly related to minimizing what's called "shopping cart abandonment"…that is the number of people who start the checkout process and for whatever reason leave it.

If selling on-line is going to be a major part of your website strategy, then getting it right is critical. Selling on-line goes beyond just the shopping cart too. There are many strategies to be considered leading up to the sale and after the sale such as:

- Pre-sales auto-responders that warm-up the prospect before the sale.
- Sales page that has been tested to convert visitors to buyers.
- Thank-you Emails to automatically send the Customer after they've made a purchase.
- Offering a surprise bonus to build customer satisfaction and reduce the rate of returns.

At Piggybank Technology, we have **lots of experience** selling on-line (we were selling our own products on-line long before we helped others do it) and know what it takes to create an effective on-line sales website.

13. Do I Like Their Work?

Everything else aside, you need to make sure you like the type of work they do!

There are many styles of websites available (we have our own that we favour for a variety of reasons) and you should make sure you like the look of the websites they create; make sure it represents the type of branding you're going for.

Do they have a:

- Portfolio of websites you can look at?
- Track record of creating websites that reflects the branding of their Customer?

- List of testimonials from Customers who are happy with the results of their website?

At Piggybank Technology, we are very proud of the thank-you letters, testimonials and words of appreciation we continue to receive. You can see a portfolio & testimonials on our website. **We're proud of what we've done for our Clients.**

14. Is There Any Marketing Intelligence Built-In?

Chances are you're not the web expert or you wouldn't be looking to hire one.

This booklet has described many of the things you need to know about in order to make an intelligent, informed decision. However, there's so much more to know.

You need to know and trust that the people you get to build your website know what they're doing, **not just from a web technology perspective, but from a marketing perspective too**. A good test of that is that they're meeting the expectations and best practices outlined in this booklet.

Ultimately, you need to meet with them and satisfy for yourself that they understand your marketing objectives and can build a website that delivers those kinds of results.

At Piggybank Technology, we have dozens of "best practices" that we build into our sites automatically, so you don't have to think twice about them. That's what we mean when we say our sites come with "marketing intelligence built-in."

15. Will They Write The Pages, Or Should I Do That?

One of the most overlooked aspects of a website is the copy. Most people think about how a website looks and forget about how it reads.

Writing for the web is different than other kinds of writing because people read websites differently. People reading websites don't read websites like they do a brochure or a book. Web visitors are skimmers!

> **Your web copy needs to tell your story to those who are quickly skimming your site and those who want every detail in writing!**

The question you need to answer is: Who will write the copy?

An effective strategy that we use with many of our Clients is to give them coaching on what should be on the websites and provide editing assistance to tweak the writing.

Some of the most effective marketing writing comes from the heart (or the hip!). No one understands your business better than you do and with the right coaching, you can write very effective marketing copy.

At Piggybank Technology, we have the training and experience to write hypnotic marketing copy and can work with you to create effective marketing copy that you can use on your website and other marketing materials.

16. Do They Design Websites For Their Own Profit Too?

Would you take dog training advice from someone who only had a cat for a pet?

Of course not!

Would you get a marketing website from someone who never successfully profited from one of their own sites?

It's one thing to have experience making websites that look great; it's a very different thing to have experience making websites that generate real income. Ask if they have any experience running their own successful web-based business.

At Piggybank Technology, we were earning money from our own websites long before we ever made one for someone else. We are experienced Internet Marketers who **run our own real businesses** on-line.

17. Will They Show Me How To Make Money With My Website?

Let's cut to the chase.

Remember…I don't think you want a website. I think you want a *Piggybank* Website…a website that makes you money by:

- Making your phone ring with sales leads
- Educating your customers to shorten the sales cycle, so they come to you ready to buy
- Selling your products directly on-line
- Selling advertising online
- Keeping in regular contact with your prospects and customers with a newsletter

It's not really a website you're buying. It's really a money-producing asset you're buying. So, you should look for someone who sells money-producing websites.

Will your web marketing partner show you specifically how your business can make more money with a website?

If you're focused on *just* the cost of getting a website, you're not ready to get a website. You need to focus on the financial return of having a website.

After all, your website is an investment. And yes, there is some risk to this investment; it's possible it won't perform as well as you hope. However, by getting clear on these two things, you can go into your website investment with confidence:

1. Clear marketing objectives.
2. Clear answer to: "Specifically how will your site be designed to deliver on those marketing objectives?"

Like any good marketing, if you go into your website project with a clear objective and plan for achieving that objective, you will be well served.

At Piggybank Technology, we don't *just* build websites; we design *Piggybank* Websites. The difference? **Our's go "Ka-ching!"**

Have Questions? Let's Talk!

Let's get the conversation going! We'll sit down with you and talk about Results**.**

Call: 705-792-7155

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Customer Reviews

Irene Turnbull,
Turnbull Interiors

"Thanks to your guidance and expertise, I am now proud of our website and I actually have a published E-book. No doubt your talent for listening and really understanding your clients is one of your secret weapons, as are your rare communication skills. I am extremely grateful to you as my Marketing coach" www.turnbullinteriors.com

Rob Macleod,
Informed Boater

"From our decision to re-do our web site to the finished product, the site has been a delightful experience. You got to know us, developed a scope of work and timeline and then delivered everything on time and on budget." www.informedboater.com

Kent Osborne, Midhurst

"In our over-hyped world it's hard to find a company that does everything they promise…after they have been paid. I needed guidance on how to optimize my site for my customer base, and I needed coaching on how to manage my site moving forward. Their expertise and ongoing support has exceeded my expectations. Piggybank is a world-class web partner for my small business." www.kentosborne.com

"We Don't Just Build Websites... We Design Piggybank Websites. The Difference? *Our's go Ka-Ching!"*

- ✓ **Built-In Experience** from successful Internet marketers who know what it takes to design successful websites.
- ✓ **100% "Walk Away" control** and ownership of your Website.
- ✓ **Mobile Friendly Websites** that automatically adjust to screen size.
- ✓ Professional, **Business-Class Websites** with business-class web hosting including back-ups and security.
- ✓ **Update your own pages**, including pictures and blog posts quickly and easily.
- ✓ Integrated **email-marketing** and list building options.
- ✓ **Joomla, Wordpress** and HTML platforms.
- ✓ Use audio and video.
- ✓ **Social Media Marketing**, including: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and more.
- ✓ **Search Engine Optimization** strategies to help get you free, qualified traffic and rank monitoring.
- ✓ **Google Analytics** so you can see all your traffic details.
- ✓ **Full-service options** that let you do what you love, while we look after the details.

Have more questions about your Website?
Let's Talk!

Call 705-792-7155
info@piggybanktechnology.com

Piggybank™ TECHNOLOGY